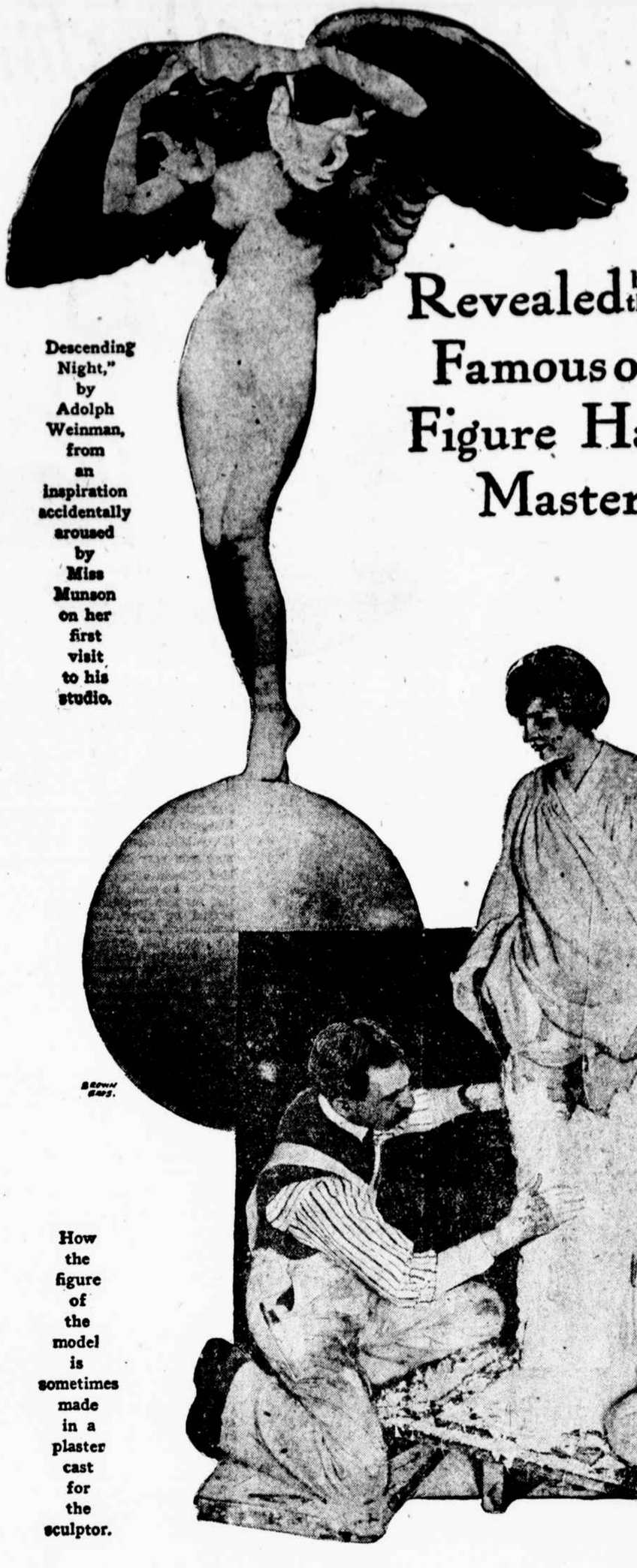
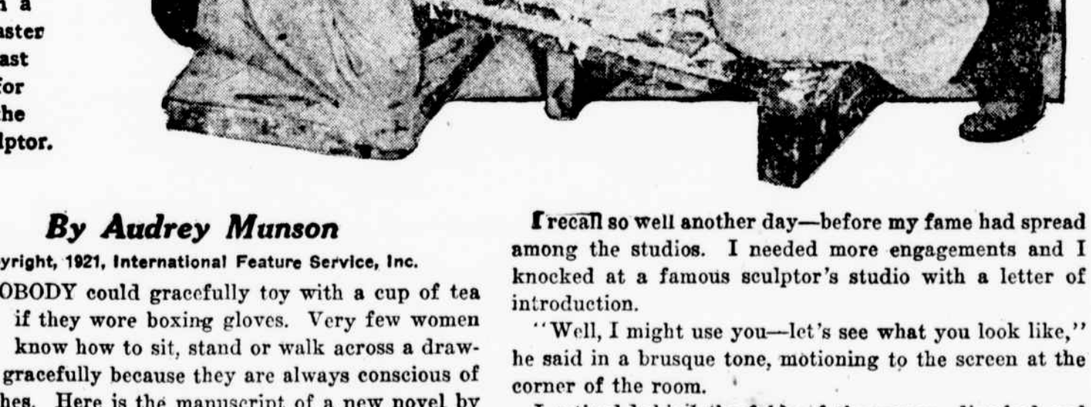
By the "Queen of the

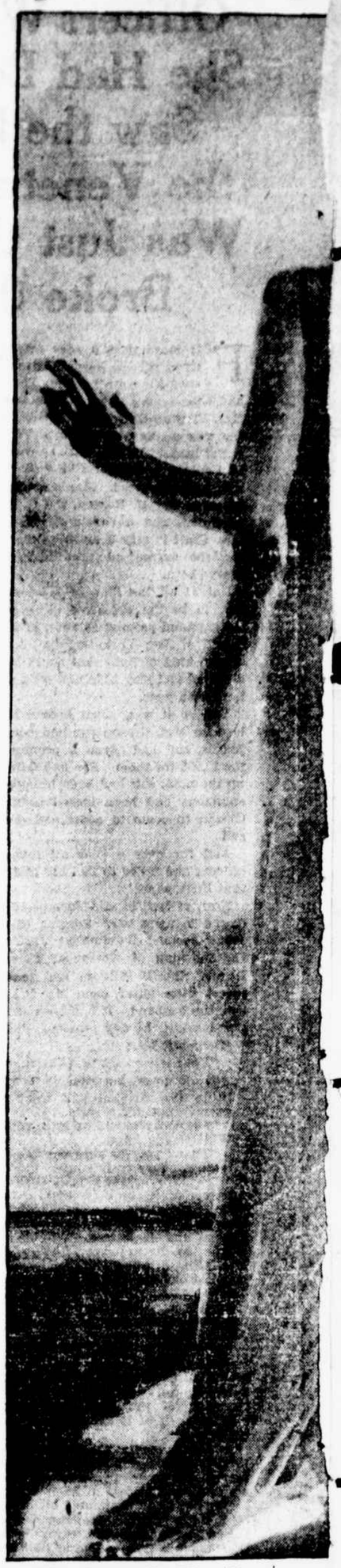
The Story of Audrey Munson—Intimate Secrets of Studio Life Revealed by the Most Perfect, Most Versatile, Most Famous of American Models, Whose Face and Figure Have Inspired Thousands of Modern Masterpieces of Sculpture and Painting



Descending Night," by Adolph Weinman, from an inspiration accidentally aroused by Miss Munson on her first visit to his studio.



How the figure of the model is sometimes made in a plaster cast for the sculptor.



"The Outcast." Miss Munson pose George M. Kess

WHAT is it that has made Miss Audrey Munson the undisputed "Queen of the Studios" for more than ten years?

Of the two hundred and more of the foremost artists and sculptors of the United States, for whose masterpieces she has been the inspiration, probably each one would give a different answer to the question.

Francis Jones found in her face the purity and sweetness he needed for the stained glass angels in the Church of the Ascension in New York; and the great MacMonnies found in her the inspiration for his voluptuous bacchanalian Sybarite. William Dodge used her bubbling vivacity for the Spirit of Play in the Amsterdam Theatre frescoes and yet her serious dignity won for Adolph Weinman the prize in the competitive statues to adorn the top of the great New York Municipal Building— and there Audrey Munson stands as "Civic Fame," cast in copper, a gigantic figure twenty feet tall.

Sherry Fry could find no one to typify maidenly innocence so well as Miss Munson and his appealing "Maidenhood" hangs on the walls of the Metropolitan Muscum of Art; but Allen Newman also found in her the inspiration for his "Southern Motherhood" which caps the pinnacle of the Capitol of the State of South Carolina, and yet for the sophisticated woman of the world the sculptress Evelyn Longman selected her for her "L'Amour" at the Metropolitan Museum. So, too, Konti modeled from her his famous "Widowhood," Pietro his "Suffering Humanity," Wenzell his charming but frivolous "Madame Butterfly," and Adams his impressive and serious "Priestess of Culture."

From the carved caryatides which support the mantelpiece in the main saloon of Mr. Morgan's yacht, the "Corsair," from the exquisite tapestries of Herter in the George Vanderbilt home, from the souvenir dollar of the San Francisco World's Fair, from the smiling water nymph on the edge of the pool in John D. Rockefeller's Tarrytown estate, from the stone angels on a hundred church and cathedral altars, from 24,000 feet of mural decorations and scores of groups of statuary at the Pan-American Exposition, the face and figure of Audrey Munson look down upon the passing multitude or adorn the homes of patrons of art.

Throughout the length and breadth of the United States in Libraries, Museums, private galleries, town and country residences, public buildings, churches, bridges, fountains, public squares and parks and private lawns and estates the most famous of all American artists' models is seen in endless variety.

Audrey Munson has written the story of her life, the incidents and episodes behind the scenes in the studios, the unknown history of the inspiration of many masterpieces in public and private art collections, the strange eccentricities and methods of the artists—and the distressing tragedies of the pretty models who lacked moral balance to safeguard them from the perils of the intimate atmosphere of the studios. Audrey Munson's fascinating story will be told from week to week on this page.

By Audrey Munson

"NOBODY could gracefully toy with a cup of tea if they wore boxing gloves. Very few women know how to sit, stand or walk across a drawing room gracefully because they are always conscious of their clothes. Here is the manuscript of a new novel by Chambers. Read this first chapter, then take off your clothes and pose yourself as the heroine sitting on the ocean beach. When you've accomplished this naturally and gracefully, then put on your clothes and we'll begin the picture."

It was Mr. A. B. Wenzell, the well-known magazine artist and illustrator of so many "best sellers," giving me instructions. It was his way of getting the inspiration he sought for the drawing he had in mind.

One January day I was sent for by a distinguished artist who had an important painting to make for the Government of Mexico. On the canvas on his great easel he had already finished the background of a waterfall. And I noticed that he had his studio built up with a curious lot of planks and supports and a sort of big basin underneath.

"There—stand right there—turn a little this way—head forward, no, not so much—that's it! Hold that pose. Now I'll turn the water on—I want to get the splashing over your form."

Before I realized it a deluge of icy water overwhelmed me. With a scream I sprang out and indignantly refused to go back. Drawing a pistol from his desk the artist forced me to resume my pose under the plunging torrent of water and shouted that I was the first model who suited his needs and he would kill me if I dared move until he had finished.

At the end of an hour he released me and, benumbed, I fainted on the studio floor. He apologized, begged forgiveness and paid for my attack of pneumonia which followed. And Carl Dorner's famous "The Waterfall" hangs in the National Museum of the City of Mexico.

I recall so well another day—before my fame had spread among the studios. I needed more engagements and I knocked at a famous sculptor's studio with a letter of introduction.

"Well, I might use you—let's see what you look like," he said in a brusque tone, motioning to the screen at the corner of the room.

I retired behind the folds of the screen, disrobed and hesitated to step out into the bright light of the studio. He was impatient and called to me to hurry up. At last I gathered my courage and tried to stride forth with head up and without self-consciousness. But as I faced the light of the room and realized that I was naked and alone before a strange man my head fell, my hands dropped in front of me—and I just drooped.

"There—stop—just as you are—never saw anything like it—but raise your arms to your head—now—don't budge!" he cried to my astonishment.

The artist rushed to his easel, fixed a piece of cardboard on it and sketched busily for what seemed hours to me. Strained, tired and aching, I began to tremble and sway. He noticed it.

"Forgive me—I have been very inconsiderate. But you gave me an inspiration. Your unconscious pose suggested night coming down out of the sky."

And Adolph Weinman's well-known statue "Descending Night" stands to-day in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the result of many hours of patiently modeling me in the inspiring pose.

And so it was—an ever changing and varied experience in my ten years of life as "The Queen of the Studios." In that time my face and figure have found expression in the work of more than two hundred of America's best-known artists and sculptors.

For years I have lived that mysterious, generally unknown life of the "artists' model." That which is the immodesty of other women has been my virtue—my willingness that the world should gaze upon my figure unadorned.

But it was not always easy for me to walk into the presence of an artist, sometimes a stranger I had seen but once or twice, and stand before him, to be inspected slowly and in detail by his appraising eyes, wholly undraped.

I mentioned above, in my suggestion of some of the experiences that have been mine, "Descending Night" which made no little fame for Adolph Weinman. As I was just beginning to be an artists' model then, when I posed for this exquisite figure in the nude, I want to describe here, when my story is just beginning, something of how I felt when I was brusquely ordered to "take off my clothes," and how that beautiful statue in New York's great Metropolitan Museum of Art really portrays my embarrassment.

I was then only a little over sixteen years old. I had been a model only a short time. One day after I had finished my schooling at St. Francis Xavier's Academy at Providence, Rhode Island, I was standing in front of a department store window on Fifth avenue in New York, wondering if, when I grew up to have money of my own, I could afford to buy some of the expensive hats I saw in the window. A young man came up to me, raised his hat, and said he was a photographer and very respectfully asked if I would like to come to his studio and pose for him—he said he would like to make some studies of my face.

I was pleased, of course. He gave me his card, which read Ralph Draper, and asked me to talk it over with my mother and bring her to his studio.

His suggesting that I bring my mother seemed to show that he was sincere. Mother was interested, and flattered, too. She took me along and I posed for a number of photographic head studies.

I shall tell later how this chance opportunity led me into studio life. But the first artist who proposed to paint me undraped was Isadore Konti, now famous as the sculptor of "The Three Graces" and many other splendid pieces of statuary. I had been given a letter to Mr. Konti by William DeLeftwich Dodge, one of America's foremost painters, who had made studies of me.

Mr. Konti at first said he did not need a model but had me, with my mother, remain to have tea with him. Suddenly he rose from the table, walked about me, asked me to stand and walk, and then said that he thought he could use me—that he had an unfinished work on which he had been engaged for three years, but never completed because he had not found the proper model.

"But," said Mr. Konti, "you will have to pose in the 'altogether.' The subject is one which will depict your entire form—not only one one pose, but three."

Mother was indignant. She scolded Mr. Konti fearfully for his daring. She was just at the point of leading me from the studio in great indignation when Mr. Konti stopped her.

"You don't know the meaning, Mrs. Munson, of posing for an artist. To us it makes no difference if our model is draped or clothed in furs. We see only the work we are doing."

For more than three months after that Mr. Konti spent several hours a day teaching mother the ways of studios and artists, persuading her that there could be nothing wrong in my posing for beautiful works of art if the imparting of my youth and feminine grace to stone and marble and bronze should help perpetuate the beautiful.

As I say, it took three months for mother to be persuaded. I shall tell after a while something of the care and pains Mr. Konti, a wonderful artist and a true lover of the beautiful, took to insure her appreciation of his assertion that it was the duty of every woman to contribute that which she could to the endurance of art and loveliness.

At last I stood before Mr. Konti without drapery. "The Three Graces" is the souvenir of my mother's consent for